RIAP BULLETIN

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Research Institute on Anomalous Phenomena (RIAP) is an independent scientific research body, established in 1992 by the Kharkov-based aerospace company *Vertical* and aimed at scientific studies in the fields of non-traditional energy sources, the problem of anomalous atmospheric phenomena and the SETI (Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence) question.

We study:
anomalous phenomena.
We consider:
any theories.
We accept:
normal proofs,
exact references.

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EDITORIAL

NEW TIMES, OLD SONGS

A few months ago the Presidium of the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS) was reviewing the work of its recently-created Commission for the Struggle Against Pseudoscience and Falsification of Results of Scientific Studies.[1] Having heard and discussed a report by E. P. Krugliakov, Full Member of the Academy and the Chairman of the Commission, the Presidium approved of its activities, supporting the conclusions and proposals of the speaker. The main troubles of the present situation in the country that disturb the elite of Russian science are uncontrollable pseudoscientific publications in the mass media, emergence of "public academies", and penetration of pseudoscience into the RAS itself.

Dr. E. P. Krugliakov called on his colleagues to "crush the Hydra of pseudoscience!" "The place must be made too hot for the ignoramuses who dare to speak in the name of science!" Both the President of the RAS, Dr. Y. S. Ossipov, and members of the Presidium who spoke after Dr. Krugliakov, have supported his approach to the questions under discussion. True, Academicians A. L. Yanshin and E. P. Chelyshev expressed their concern that in the heat of the struggle against pseudoscience one could "throw out the baby with the bath-water... [that is] obscure or unstudied phenomena that could be easily regarded as non-existent." But their colleagues have paid little if any attention to this warning.

The impression gained from this discussion is rather joyless. Seemingly, the Russian academic elite still cannot understand that they are now living in a different world as compared to that before 1991. A newspaper under capitalism differs radically from a newspaper under socialism ("a collective organizer and propagandist") and the Academy of Sciences itself also differs. Retaining its functions as *the* center of pure science in the country, it is already deprived of the share of the controlling and ideological functions that had been delegated to it by the Party and State authorities of the former USSR. There is absolutely no sense in trying to persuade newspaper editors to inform the readers in their publications only about "scientifically proved" facts. At present even the official mass media do not care a hang for what had once been academic censorship of some questions (the UFO problem included), to say nothing of privately owned journals and newspapers. Just as much, "alternative academies" will also be created, irrespective of the RAS's opinion of this process and with very different intellectual standards (as may be predicted and as one can already see)—from definitely high to, alas, extremely low.

The question whether it is for bad or for good is rather meaningless. This is an objective fact and objective facts have always been the air of true science. The former Soviet system of institutionalized science had many advantages (as compared with the Western one) and no less disadvantages. When the State owns everything, such a structure as a state-maintained Academy where the interests of the State and of Science are brought into concord of a sort is certainly an advantage. Hence the great successes of the USSR in physics, chemistry, cosmonautics, and some other fields of knowledge and technology. But the evident asymmetry of this concord (the State elite is "more equal"), coupled with the absence of the freedom of speech, is a big shortcoming that repeatedly led to failures in mastering advanced scientific directions of research (Lysenkoism instead of conventional genetics; defining cybernetics as a "reactionary *pseudoscience*"; the Chernobyl disaster; etc., etc.)

It does also seem that members of the Russian Academy of Sciences worry seriously that they will have to share with "public academies" the budget means allocated to science. All these propagandists of pseudoscience have, in the view of Academician N. A. Plate, one and only one purpose—"to grab a slice of the budget cake". Games with scientific degrees and diplomas are, of course, also blameworthy, but infringement upon the holy of holies cannot be tolerated at all!

Thus, everything appears to be clear: reactionaries from the Academy are dreaming to bring back the past, where they had both more power and more money. Many Russian enthusiasts-ufologists are treating the activities of the Commission on Pseudoscience in just this way—the more so, that ufology was also kicked, even if briefly, in E. P. Krugliakov's speech. One cannot say that these reminiscences were completely lacking in the academical discussion around "pseudoscience". All these "Hydras" and "the place must be made too hot..." are certainly echoes from the past bearing rather emotional than informational content.[2] But it would be utterly unfair to reduce the problem to a sort of historical nostalgia. It is in fact both deeper and harder-to-solve.

First, the question of funding "normal" scientific studies in the current economic situation in Russia and (to an even greater extent) other CIS countries is very important and far from having been solved. But pseudoscience is hardly the main obstacle for that.

Second, a monopoly on truth, as has been more than once demonstrated by history, is no guarantee of correct decisions. The system of

checking for high quality of scientific results developed by science is one of its most significant achievements, but taken alone it is not always sufficient to choose between competing theories, much less between competing research strategies.

One of the important components of this quality control system—the mechanism of selection of scientific ideas—works sometimes "too symmetrically", cutting off both ends of the frequency function—"too silly" and "too original" ideas. That is the reason why scholars even in rich countries, where science is financed much better than in the Community of Independent States, feel the need to form alternative scientific communities, whose research standards combine the "ban on silliness" with permissiveness as regards innovative ideas. Such is, in particular, the Society for Scientific Exploration established in the USA some twenty years ago.

Certainly, to combine rigorousness with open-mindedness is not so simple; it is far easier to throw up one's hands tragically, appealing to crush the "Hydra of pseudoscience". But in Academician A. L. Yanshin's warning about the "bath-water" and the "baby" one can see much more true scholarly erudition and culture than in all these lamentations.

Does all the above-said mean that there exists no pseudoscience at all? Certainly not—although, to *my* mind, it is not worthy of this name, being thereby promoted to a higher rank than it deserves. One certainly can take out a patent for the discovery of the "informationally-energetic multi-manifestation on Earth and in near space of a non-human intelligence"[3]—but has it anything to do even with *pseudo*science?..

On the other hand, the social roots of "true pseudoscience" are extending not only into what "pseudoscientists" "wish for, but are not capable of", but also into what "true scientists" "are (perhaps) capable of, but do not wish for". Participating in the discussion on pseudoscience, Academician A. S. Spirin appealed to his colleagues "to popularize scientific achievements interestingly and in a simple form—that alone would be the best way to struggle with pseudoscience". This is a sensible idea indeed, but even more sensible would have been another appeal: *study everything unknown in the scientific way*, and not thrust your heads into the sand. The refusal of science to investigate those real phenomena that are poorly "caught" by the "nets" of scientific theoretical notions and research equipment (such as UFOs and psi-phenomena) is the best possible nutrient medium for pseudoscience. After all, amateur ufology in the USSR started with attempts to draw the attention of established science to this phenomenon. Its negative reaction to these attempts led eventually to the formation of an "alternative community" with, to put it mildly, rather loosened cognitive standards.

The reader may make an objection: a negative reaction, surely? But judging from the paper "History of State-Directed UFO Research in the USSR" by Yuliy Platov and Boris Sokolov published in RB, 1999, Vol. 5, No. 3-4, there had been carried out in the former USSR a gigantic official program of UFO studies?! That's certainly so. I can also add that this paper has just been published in Russian in the *Herald of the Russian Academy of Sciences* (2000, Vol. 70, No. 6, pp. 507–515). This work should not be underestimated at all. Some Russian enthusiasts-ufologists gave it an immediate hostile reaction, taking no trouble to look more closely into its contents. At the same time, substantial criticism has also been expressed—particularly, in some RB readers' letters. In this issue of the Bulletin we are publishing two letters of this kind—written by L. M. Gindilis and P. N. Rybalko. There will appear other ones in the forthcoming RB issues and we certainly hope to publish in due course a reply from the paper's authors.

In closing—a few words about a paper that opens this issue of the Bulletin—"The Mysterious Moonshaft", by Antonin T. Horak. Generally speaking, this is just another "story" about an enigmatic find and, also, a reprint (which appear in our periodical only exceptionally). However, the Scientific Council of RIAP has agreed that the paper is important and informative enough to draw our readers' attention to it. Possible existence of such an enigmatic artificial structure not somewhere in Amazonia, but in the Tatra Mountains, not far from the state frontier between Ukraine and Slovakia, does certainly merit notice, and the idea to commence a search for this structure can hardly be regarded as fantastic. If several anomalistic (and perhaps also—why not?—scientific) research bodies united their efforts and resources in this affair, I can suppose a tangible result would not be too long in coming.

Notes and references

[1] See: Established Pseudoscience: A Discussion at the Presidium of the RAS.—*Herald of the Russian Academy of Sciences*, 1999, Vol. 69, No. 10. For short, we will designate it below as Commission on Pseudoscience.

[2] "The Hydra of counterrevolution" is a popular expression from the epoch of the Civil War in Russia (1918–1920), and "the place must be made too hot for the German invaders"—that from the epoch of the Great Patriotic War (1941–1945).

[3] That's not a fantasy. This patent was granted on June 14, 2000, to Dr. V. G. Azhazha, Full Member of the International Academy of Informatization, by the registration body of this very Academy.

— Vladimir V. Rubtsov

THE MOONSHAFT

Antonin T. Horak

From RB Editor: This article, authored by the late Dr. A. T. Horak, originally appeared in the March, 1965, issue of NSS News, *published by the National Speleological Society (2813 Cave Avenue, Huntsville, Alabama 35810-4431, USA). We are especially indebted to Mr. Ray Keeler, NSS Executive Vice President, for granting permission to reprint it in* RIAP Bulletin.

[NSS News] Editor's Note: This article is a translation by the author from his own journal. Antonin T. Horak was a captain in the Slovak Uprising during World War II, and he tells of his discovery of a strange "moonshaft" in a cave in Czechoslovakia. Dr. Horak is a linguist who is now a U.S. Citizen living in Pueblo, Colorado, and he hopes to persuade speleologists to study his moonshaft further and to learn its true nature. The illustrations were traced from sketches that he made 20 years ago in the cave, which is located near the villages of Plavince and Lubocna at about 49.2°N, 20.7°E. The journal was written when Dr. Horak and two of his wounded soldiers were found by a peasant and rescued from capture.

****

October 23, 1944. Early yesterday, Sunday, October 22nd, Slavek found us in a trench and hid us in this grotto. Today at nightfall he and his daughter Hanka came with food and medicine. We had not eaten since Friday, and all we had had before, during the last two battles, was maize bread and not enough of that. Our commissary had been on its last legs anyway; the supply carriers had been dispersed by the confusion and the enemy.

Saturday afternoon the remnants of our battalion (184 men and officers, a quarter wounded, 16 stretcher cases) were retreating through the snow of the north slope. My company was the rear guard. At dawn Sunday, two 70 mm guns opened-up at us from close range—about 300 meters. Having held our position for 12 hours, I ordered a gradual breakup of the skirmish and a slip-off. But in our left trench someone became careless, and that drew 2 direct hits—shells, two wounded. Arriving there I bumped into the enemy, caught a bayonet and bullet with my left palm and a blow on my head, which put me out. Without my fur cap it might have been fractured.

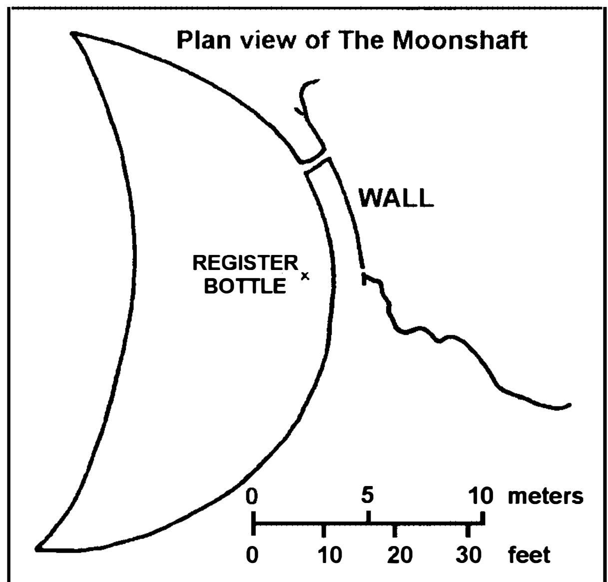
I came to when someone was pulling me from the trench, a tall peasant. He packed snow on my hand and head, and grinned. Then this rough and ready Samaritan grabbed Jurek, stripped off his pants, yanked a long slivver of steel from his thigh, and planted him bare-bottomed and gasping into a heap of snow. Martin, with a slash across and into his belly was tenderly bandaged. Building a stretcher, the peasant introduced himself as Slavek, a sheepman, owner of the pastures hereabouts. With Slavek hauling and guiding, it took us four hours to reach this cranny.

Slavek moved rocks in the cranny and opened a low cleft, the entrance to this roomy grotto. Placing Martin in a niche, we were astonished to see Slavek become ceremonious: he crossed himself, each of us, the grotto, and, with a deep bow, its back wall, where a hole came to my attention.

About to leave us, Slavek went through the same holy rites, and begged me not to go further into his cave. I accompanied him to fetch pine boughs, and he told me that only once, with his father and grandfather, had he been in this cave; that it is a huge maze, full of pits which they never wanted to fathom, pockets of poisonous air, and "certainly haunted". I was back in the grotto with my men at about midnight, exhausted, head very painful, soothed it with snow. Martin was unconscious, Jurek feverish. For breakfast-lunch-dinner he and I had hot water, and, thank God, I had my pipe. I placed warm stones around Martin, and Jurek got the first watch.

Miserable night. Martin at times conscious; I gave him 3 aspirins and hot water to sip with drops of Slivovitz. Jurek hobbled hungrily around the two German helmets in which he boiled water to which I added 10 drops of Slivovitz, our breakfast. With this deluge of snow, avalanches imminent, and enemy skiers roaming, Slavek may not be able to get through to us with food for days to come. And neither should I try hunting and track up the landscape while I have two immobilized men on my hands. But here we have this cave which Slavek knows only partially; it may have more than this known entrance, and it may contain hibernating animals. These possibilities I mulled over while Jurek was chewing pine bark, and, as expected, he implored me to go poaching into Slavek's cave and promised to keep mum. And I was not only starved but equally eager to find out what makes self-assured Slavek scared enough to invoke the Deities. I started my cave tour with rifle, lantern, torches, pick. After a not too devious nor dangerous walk and some squeezings, always taking the easiest and marking side passages, I came, after about 1½ hours, into a long, level passage, and at its end upon a barrel-sized hole.

Crawling through and still kneeling, I froze in amazement—there stands something like a large, black silo, framed in white. Regaining breath I

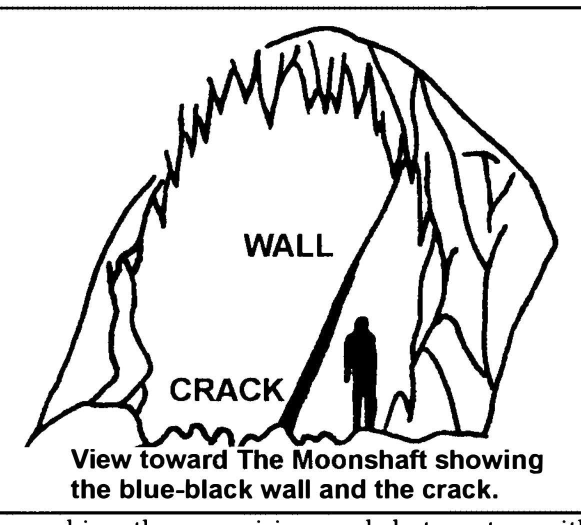


thought that this is a bizarre, natural wall or curtain of black salt, or ice, or lava. But I became perplexed, then awestruck when I saw that it is a glass-smooth flank of a seemingly man-made structure which reaches into the rocks on all sides. Beautifully, cylindrically curved it indicates a huge body with a diameter of about 25 meters. Where this structure and the rocks meet, large stalagmites and stalactites form that glittering white frame. The wall is uniformly blue-blackish, its material seems to combine properties of steel, flint, rubber—the pick made no marks and bounced off vigorously. Even the thought of a tower-sized artifact; embedded in rock in the middle of an obscure mountain, in a wild region where not even legend knows about ruins, mining, industry; overgrown with age-old cave deposits, is bewildering—the fact is appalling.

Not immediately discernible, a crack in the wall appears from below, about 20 to 25 cm. wide, tapers off and disappears into the cave's ceiling, 2 to 5 cm. wide. Its insides, right and left, are pitch black and have fist-sized, sharp valleys and crests. The crack's bottom is a rather smooth trough of yellow sandstone, and drops very steeply (about 60°) into the wall. I threw a lighted torch through; it fell and extinguished with loud clacklings and hissings as if a white hot ploughshare were dropped into a bucket.

Driven to explore, and believing me thin enough to get through this upside-down keyhole, I went in. Wriggling sideways, injured hand and head below and steeply downward, nearly standing on my head, cramped, though my right arm with the lamp could move in the extended crack above me, the crush got the better of me and I had to get out, back, quickly. And that became a struggle. When out and breath regained, I was too fascinated by the whole riddle and determined to get at it. For the day I had had enough and had to think about tactics.

I was in camp about 4 p.m. Jurek had washed Martin, kept him between warm stones, and I



View toward The Moonshaft showing the blue-black wall and the crack.

gave him three aspirins and hot water with Slivovitz to sip. I explained to Jurek that the hunt in the cave requires much smoke, poles and a rope. Thank God, Slavek and Hanka did come with provisions. When they left I accompanied them to fetch torch boughs, was back in camp at about 2 a.m., dead tired, but finally we had eaten—Jurek too much—and I got the 2nd watch.

October 24, 1944. Peaceful night; Martin sipped fever-tea with honey; hope we can pull him through. Jurek's posterior is not even swollen, but my head still is. I cut our belts, braided 8 meters of solid rope. At 10 a.m. was at the wall; anchored the rope over a stick across the crack, and keeping it slung over my shoulder, forced myself again into the grim maw. Like yesterday, the lamp, this time carbide, was on a stick ahead within the jaw above. When it came through and down, it swung freely over some void into which I could not see, and there was again rushing as if from agitated waters. And, unable to turn, I feared a water-filled pit ahead and to end in it—literally—in a headstand.

I wriggled upward, back again; my clothes caught on the protrusions, descended on my shoulders and head, and formed a plug. The resulting struggle nearly caused me to be burned alive. When out and on my feet, I was shaking from exhaustion, and had lurid visions.

There was no loose stones about the wall, and so I hacked stalagmites into short rolls and bowled them down through the crack. They rolled on, causing enormous echoes, and knocked to a standstill, indicating a solid floor and room to turn. I launched the unlit torches after the stones, undressed, keeping the shirt only, and went after the stones and torches. Already acquainted with the meanest fangs in the crack, I came through with only a few cuts, dropped a little, rolled down an incline and was stopped by a wall which felt familiar, satiny smooth like the front wall.

My lamp was still burning next to me, but there were confusing sounds. Lighting some

torches, I saw that I was in a spacious, curved, black shaft formed by cliff-like walls which intersect and form a crescent-shaped, nearly vertical tunnel, rather shaft. I cannot describe the somberness and the endless whisperings, rustlings, and roaring sounds, abnormal echoes from my breathing and movements. The floor is the incline over which I rolled in, a solid lime "pavement".

All the lights together did not reach the ceiling of where walls end or meet. The horizontal distance between the apexes of the concave backside of the front wall and the convex back wall is about 8 meters; along the curve of the back wall is about 25 meters. To explore further I needed more light and my pick, which does not fit through the crack and must be taken apart.

I left jubilant, in a sort of enchantment mixed with determination to explore this large structure, which I believe is unique, singular.

This time with my head up, with no clothes to ensnare and burn me, I was through the crack fairly unscathed, dressed, smoked a pipe, and was underway to my men. I tried to catch some bats, but caught none. Jurek was boiling potatoes and mutton and therefore inclined to excuse my bad huntsmanship; he even appreciated its hardships when he had to grease the scratches on my back, and mend my shirt.

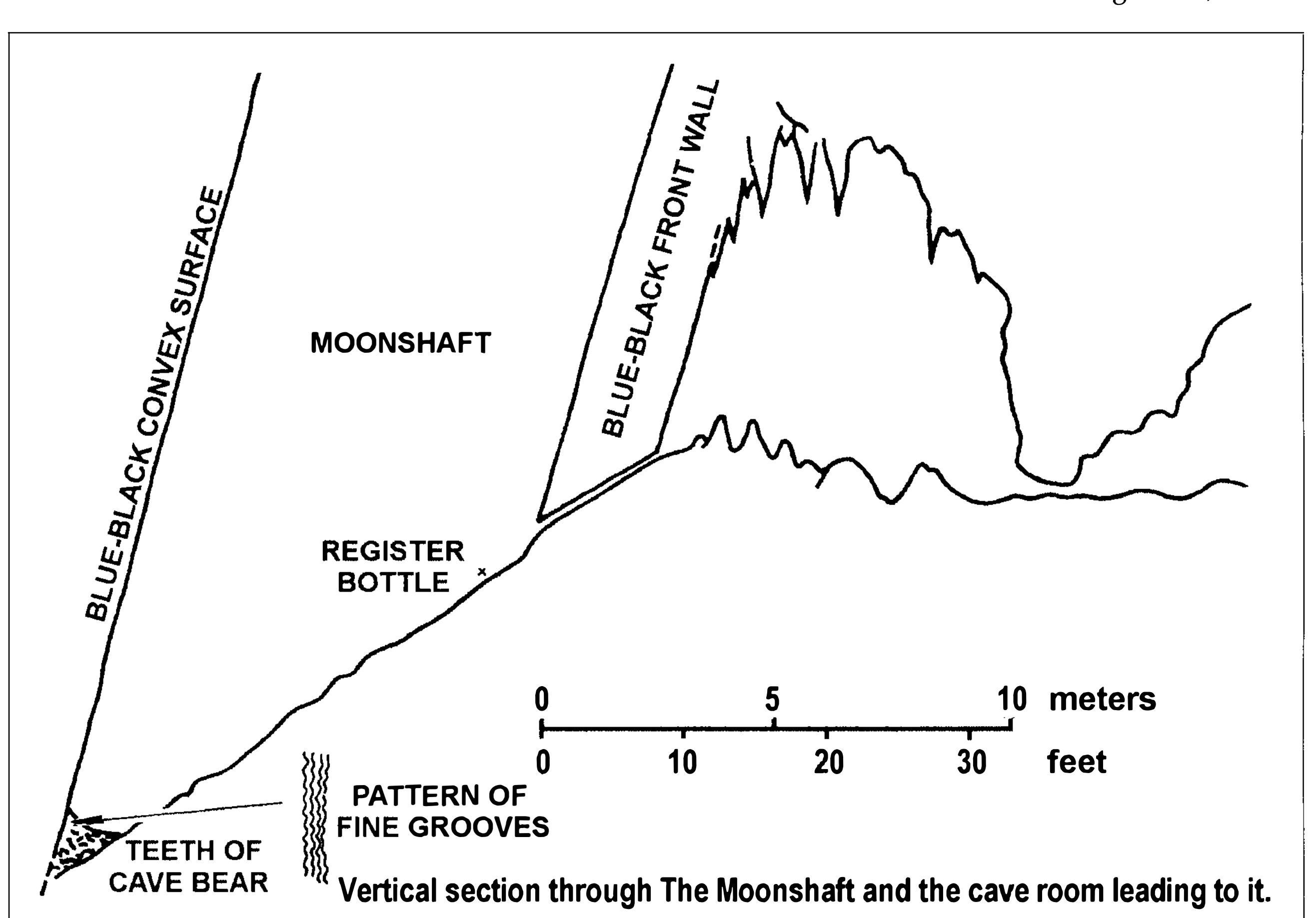
Martin had a crumb of bread with honeyed fevertea. After 6 p.m. I went for a new load of torches, was back at about 10 p.m. Jurek got both watches.

October 25, 1944. We had a good night. Martin seems to mend. Am glad that Jurek's thigh is not yet well enough for him to want to go with me poaching for bats. It is better that he knows nothing about the cave's secret.

I went directly to the wall, undressed like yesterday, smeared muttonfat over me, sling my things through the crack and went in, feet first. Extending the carbide lamp upon a double pole, with four torches burning, still the upper ends of the cliffs remained in the dark. I fired two bullets up, parallel to the walls. The reports caused roars as from an express train, but no impact was visible. Then I fired a bullet on each wall, aiming some 15 meters upward from me, got large bluegreen sparks and such a sound that I had to hold my ears between my knees, and flames danced wildly.

Assembling the pick caused more uproars. I probed the "pavement", and started digging where the lime is thin, in the horns of the crescent. At right is dry loam; at left I came, at about half a meter, upon a pocket of enamel from the teeth of some large animal; took one canine and one molar, replaced the rest. Digging on nearby, the backwall has, at about 1½ m below the pavement, a vertical, finely fluted, undulating pattern. It seemed warmer than the smooth surface. I tried with lip and ear, and believe the impression is correct. In the middle the pavement is too thick for a trenchpick.

When the torches were extinguished, and I



Vertical section through The Moonshaft and the cave room leading to it.

was in a freezing sweat, I left the "moonshaft", dressed and went where the bats are, and bagged seven. Jurek stuffed them with bread and herbs and they became exquisite "pigeons".

Slavek and Olga, his other daughter, came about dusk with hay, straw, a sheeps fleece, more medical herbs—selfheal and stonecrop—and seeds from the Iris, an excellent coffee substitute. I accompanied him, fetched pine torches, two long poles, and was back about midnight. Martin got the last aspirins, honey-water; and Jurek both watches.

October 26, 1944. It was a good night. I went into the moonshaft to continue experimenting. On my longest assembly of poles the carbide lamp did not light the upper end of these cliffs. I fired above the lighted areas; the bullets struck huge sparks and made deafening echoes. Then horizontally at the back wall with similar effects—sparks, roaring, no splinters, but a half-finger-long welt which gave a pungent smell. After that I continued in my digging in the left moon horn and saw that the wavy pattern extends downward; but in the right horn I found no such pattern.

I left the moonshaft to probe the front wall and its surroundings. Next to the stalactites are some enamel-like flecks which, scraped, yield a powder too fine to be collected without glue, which I will try to boil from our "pigeons's" claws. I wished to obtain a sample of the peculiar material of the walls, but even firing two bullets into the crack, upon the protrusions and hitting them, I received only ricochets, a blast of thunder, welts, and the same pungent smell.

Returning to camp I caught some bats and we again had "pigeons". I ordered Jurek to carefully remove any trace of them, and kept the claws. The Slaveks arrived as usual at nightfall bringing this time a quarter of a deer, ½ kilogram of salt, and a tin of carbide. Jurek took both watches.

October 27, 1944. Martin died, slept into death. Jurek knows his kin, took charge of his belongings, including his wallet with 643 crowns, watch with chain, and my certificate. Now we are free and ready to leave and rejoin our battalion which is somewhere east of Kosice. With his stick Jurek can march some 10 kilometers daily, and we have to move carefully anyway. We will start tomorrow.

At 10 a.m. I was in the cave probing passages for a way around behind the moonshaft; looked also for ice and poisonous air about which Slavek had spoken, and found none, though there may be some. Then I slipped into the moonshaft to sketch, dig, and ponder, and returned to camp at about 4 p.m. I ordered Jurek to prepare our packs, clean the weapons, boil food for seven days, and have ready what we will not need to be returned to the Slaveks. He and both girls, as if the family had sensed that Martin died, came, and we carried him into the dwarf pines to the trench where he had received his mortal wound, took turns to dig his grave, prayed, and buried him in a blanket. Slavek briefed me as best he could about the enemy eastward from here. Jurek and I were back in our grotto at midnight, and he took both watches; he can sleep most of the day tomorrow.

October 28, 1944. Restful night, good breakfast. Cut my name, etc., on a leather strip, and together with the golden back of my watch rolled and inserted both engravings into a glass bottle, plugged it with a pebble and a ball of clay mixed with charcoal , and deposited this record in the moonshaft, on top of the ashes of my torches. It may stay there for a long time, possibly until the structure is completely hidden behind its curtain of stalactites and stalagmites. Slavek has no son to tell him about his cave-mystery; his womenfolk don't know about it, and anyway daughters usually marry to other villages. In a few decades nobody will know, if I do not come back and have the structure explored.

I sat there by my fire speculating: What is this structure, with walls 2 meters thick and a shape that I cannot imagine of any purpose known nowadays? How far does it reach into the rocks? Is there more behind the moonshaft? Which incident or who put it into this mountain? Is it a fossilized man-made object? Is there truth in legends, like Plato's, about long-lost civilizations with magic technologies which our rationale cannot grasp nor believe?

I am a sober, academically trained person but must admit that there, between these black, satiny, mathematically-curved cliffs I do feel as if in the grip of an exceedingly strange and grim power. I can understand that simple but intelligent and practical men like Slavek and his forebears sense here witchery, conceal it, and also fear that if the existence of this moonshaft is ever made known, it would attract armies of tourists, and all the commotion, tunneling and blasting, hotels, and commercialization which would probably ruin their nature-bound trade and honest life. If and when I come back it will be with a team of secrecy-bound experts: geologist, metallurgist, cave expert; and if the object is of true importance for the advancement of knowledge and proper civilization, ways will have to be found to respect the Slavek's interests.

On my way back to camp I burrowed and hid the crawl holes which lead toward the wall; the cave may have entrances which Slavek does not know, and some chance discoverer may start blasting "for treasure" before a scientific team can get there. I was in camp after 3 p.m., and about 5 all three Slaveks arrived, bringing some hard-boiled eggs. Jurek asked permission to talk privately with Slavek, and then Hanka was carefully sounded out by her father whether she

would accept Jurek as her husband. She cried and laughed, Jurek gave her his photograph and golden watch which his father had brought from America; Jurek is a well-to-do carpenter in Bratislava. I am invited to the wedding and will try to come. To make sure, I gave Hanka a letter to a befriended jeweler and commanded her to get the nicest set of Bohemian garnets as a wedding present. The Slaveks had brought their family Bible, and I made some entries.

With the haardy Slovak handshakes, and *Mhoho stiastia, Pan Buh pozebnaj Vas, Buh s tebou*, we shouldered our weapon and packs and went. When we entered the pines and turned we saw Slavek concealing his cave and the girls sweeping away our tracks. The moon was bright and the snow glittered.

October 30, 1944. We moved during the dark hours only and along the timber line. During daylight, camping snuggly below a fine pinetree, were alrmed by the sound of infantry fire; approaching to investigate we observed a strong group of insurgents skirmishing with a ski party of Wehrmacht and Polish Blue Police (fascists). The fascists went soon, and, joining the insurgents, we were their guests for a whole day. They were a mixed group of Hechaluts, ZOB and DROR, from the Rzeszow in adjacent Poland, who had helped in our Uprising and were now on their way back—through immense snow—to their usual sectors between Cracow and Przemysl. Their physician was Rachel W., the widow of a murdered Jewish doctor; she knew and told us about the exploits of the famous Jesia Fryman Banda against the Nazists; and fed us two fine, hot meals. When these valiant Jewish fighters were marching on northward, we had to go southward, towards Kosice, which we reached on our 6th day; and there receiving directions we could proceed to join our battalion which was awaiting the next offensive of the Red Army to join it until to the end of the war.

In the very last days of World War II, on my way toward Bohemia, I revisited the place. The Slaveks lived temporarily at Zdar. I visited Martin's grave and looked at the cave entrance. I had taken the animal teeth I had collected to the curator of paleontology at Uzhorod, and he classified them as adult cave bear, *Ursus spaeleus*. Thereupon I speculated: the crack is too small; the lump of limestone and stalagmites in front of the crack would not let any debris through; this bear seems to have fallen into the moonshaft, which may have had a connection to the surface.

In correspondence dealing with plans for the publication of this journal, Dr. George W. Moore suggested that the moonshaft might have been dissolved from a steeply-dipping limestone layer between curved parallel sheets of chert. I am skeptical. All the inner surfaces of the moonshaft are composed of the same material. Also, such an hypothesis does not explain the peculiar, exactly parallel, finely grooved pattern on the back surface (or wall) of the left horn.

On my last visit to the place, I examined the mountainside above the cave and found no sinkholes or pits, the assumed connections toward the moonshaft. But on these steep slopes in the Tatra Mountains, rockslides could have obliterated or filled in any such connections.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

LET'S FORMULATE IT DIFFERENTLY

Sir,

I think that publication of the paper "History of State-Directed UFO Research in the USSR" by Yuliy Platov and Boris Sokolov is of great interest and importance to the scientific community (not only to specialists in the UFO problem). It is particularly remarkable that the Russian version of this paper was simultaneously published in the *Herald of the Russian Academy of Sciences* (2000, Vol. 70, No. 6). Hence, this publication may be considered as an official one—scotching any rumors of suppression as regards the State program of UFO studies in the former USSR. Foreign readers (as well as many Russian readers outside Moscow) cannot easily find the *Herald of the RAS* (*HRAS*) in their libraries and bookshops; therefore publication of the English version of this paper in *RIAP Bulletin* is very opportune. One should note that the *HRAS* version of the paper is somewhat shorter than that published in RB, but the passages omitted are not too essential.

As correctly noted by the paper's authors, the formal pretext to develop the State program of UFO studies in the USSR was provided by the Petrozavodsk phenomenon of 1977. When investigating it, I was also drawn directly into preparing this Program. Together with Boris Sokolov, we went to Petrozavodsk in January of 1978 as members of the Interdepartmental Commission (in this Commission I was representing the Academy of Sciences, and Boris Sokolov the Ministry of Defense). Subsequently we carried on with our cooperation up until the Military-Industrial Commission issued its Decision to proceed with the *Setka MO* and *Setka AN* research programs. (As for Yuliy Platov, he joined up with the work somewhat later.)[1] Immediately after the Decision was issued I was removed from this official work

and had to concentrate on voluntary UFO studies. Our academic authorities have never revealed why they decided to fire me and therefore I can only make guesses as to the reasons behind this order. It could be partly due to some libellous denunciations against me, but these hardly played the main role in the affair. More probably, the authorities were irritated with the excessive zeal I had shown for investigating the UFO problem.

For them, the situation looked very unpleasant. Even though the circumstances took such a turn that it was impossible simply to dismiss the matter, nobody in the upper crust of the Academy wished to take it up. Due to the negative attitude of the scientific community to the UFO problem, this would have been rather dangerous for their reputation.

Mention should be made of one important detail, though. The authors of the paper state that after the Petrozavodsk event the USSR Academy of Sciences could not turn its back on the UFO problem due to the official letter of inquiry of the Karelian authorities and numerous letters of local inhabitants. I think it was not the case, or at least not the whole case. As a matter of fact, the attitude of the academic authorities changed after the very first reports about the Petrozavodsk phenomenon arrived. I was much surprised with that change. Before, I studied the phenomenon purely on my own. Now, I was permitted to investigate it in working hours, as well as to use my office phone for long-distance calls. My reports were listened to with attention. There was a rumor that the Academy of Sciences had obtained a missive that could not be ignored. Where the missive had originated from, remained vague—but mid-level academic bureaucrats significantly pointed their forefingers to the ceiling, hinting thereby that it had arrived from the very top—that is, from the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR. One can suppose that it was Yuriy Andropov who displayed interest in the Petrozavodsk phenomenon. Then he was the chief of the Committee of State Security (KGB) of the USSR, but in the years of the Great Patriotic War Andropov had been one of the heads of the guerilla movement in Karelia. But again, this is just a hypothesis, I have no proof of it.

Be it as it may, in 1978 there was launched in the USSR the State program of UFO studies that lasted for 13 years. This was an unprecedented monitoring of anomalous atmospheric phenomena indeed! Basically, it was run by the military. For the first time, the paper reveals trustworthy and detailed information about the Directive of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the USSR that was approved in January of 1980. It was just this Directive that made it possible to use the great observational potential of the Soviet Army to track UFOs over and through the vast territory of the Soviet Union. The military are very disciplined people: they fulfilled their part of the program. As regards the academical part, the state of affairs is not so simple. The Academy of Sciences undertook to investigate "the physical nature and mechanisms of manifestations of anomalous atmospheric and space phenomena". If by "anomalous phenomena" are implied those accompanying space launches and other technogeneous processes, then one should admit that progress in investigating mechanisms of their manifestations has certainly been made. But with *UFOs* in the strict sense of this term (that is, with *unidentified, unexplained* phenomena) this result has nothing to do. The nature and origin of these objects still remain a mystery for science. One should not, however, reproach Russian or Soviet scientists with this failure—even taking into account their reluctance to treat the UFO problem seriously (as pointed out above). After all, nobody in the world has solved the problem as yet. It is my firm conviction that in the framework of the current scientific paradigm such a solution cannot be achieved.

What are the results of the 13-year UFO monitoring? One can learn from the paper that the scientists investigated some 3000 reports describing about 400 strange events. More than 90% of those were explained by rocket launches and balloon flights. This wording is rather crafty—demonstrating the "explanatory bias", so characteristic both of the paper's authors and the Soviet UFO studies as a whole. What does it mean—"more than 90%"? Does it imply 90.1%, or 95.0%? And if more than 90% of the sightings are explicable in terms of the above-mentioned technical experiments, does it mean that remaining sightings may be attributed to other known causes? To the best of my knowledge, the figure presented by the authors is indeed correct: 90% of the anomalous events were explained. But the same result may be formulated differently: *10% of the events have remained unexplained. This result seems to be of much importance indeed*—especially when we bear in mind the gigantic extent of the monitoring.

The "explanatory bias" of the authors has also shown itself in their selection of illustrative examples. Typically, Platov and Sokolov cite the cases that had been explained as rocket launches and balloon flights. But these are of little if any interest for serious UFO studies. By contrast, unexplained UFO cases (which would have certainly deserved further analysis) have remained outside the scope of the paper. The only exception is a cursory reference to puzzling accidents that happened to military airplanes near Borisoglebsk in the presence of an unknown object in the air. The Petrozavodsk phenomenon has also been placed by the authors into the group of identified pseudo-UFOs—believing that it was due to the

effects associated with the launching of the artificial satellite *Kosmos-955* from the Plesetsk launching site. This lift-off did certainly take place and its effects were superimposed on the whole picture of the phenomenon.[2] But the point is that a number of data are inconsistent with this scenario. Thus, some eyewitnesses saw luminous objects under total cloud cover, that is *below* clouds. A very important investigation was performed at Petrozavodsk University under the guidance of A. G. Mezentsev. On the basis of theodolite measurements made while questioning eyewitnesses, there were detected coordinates of the object while it was hovering. Having processed these data, A. G. Mezentsev determined the following spatial position of the object: the distance from the city center 19.7±0.10 km, azimuth 40°, and altitude 6 to 9 km. This result seems to be statistically reliable. Besides, the object displayed an appreciable parallax with respect to the motionless glow in the north-east: at some points in the city the glow was seen in the direction of departure of the body, and at other points it was seen to the right of it. This fact also suggests that the Petrozavodsk object was positioned not far from the city. Neither can the failed attempt to launch a ballistic rocket, mentioned by the authors as an additional factor in the whole picture, account for these features. Needless to say, ignoring these and some other facts would let us build a self-consistent model of the phenomenon. One should, however, bear in mind a very reasonable remark made by Claude Poher years ago: when studying the UFO phenomenon (as with any other investigation, of course), one ought not to arbitrarily discard data that do not fit in an explanatory hypothesis.

There are in the paper under consideration some small factual errors. Thus, the team headed by V. A. Leshkovtsev at the Branch of General and Applied Physics of the USSR Academy of Sciences was active in the 1960's. In the period covered by the paper Leshkovtsev was working at the journal *Kvant*, struggling against UFOs with the help of the Moscow city branch of the All-Union *Znaniye* (Knowledge) Society. More than once the authors mention the Kiyasov meeting that was supposedly held in October of 1977. According to my own notes of that period, this meeting took place on December 21 of that year. In October was held another interdepartmental meeting—that at the Institute of Space Research. There the present author reported the first preliminary results of the Petrozavodsk data analysis. The State Program of UFO Studies was not even conceived at the meeting, although the idea of establishing a special commission on the Petrozavodsk phenomenon was—with reservations—being discussed. Platov and Sokolov are bluffing when they state that planned UFO publications were just "preliminarily read and approved", but not censored in the USSR Academy of Sciences. In fact, this was censorship, pure and simple—even though the functions of *Glavlit* [the central censorship organization in the former Soviet Union,—*Ed.*] were in this case delegated to the Academy. The censors' duties were performed by some officials from the Department of General Physics and Astronomy, as well as by members of the Expert Group on Anomalous Phenomena (Platov included).

It is correctly observed by the paper's authors that no special means were allocated to carry out the academical UFO studies. The very limited expenses for the salary of a few specialists, as well as for infrequent travels, were covered from the budget of organizations participating in the program. Given the inclination, it would probably have been possible to obtain special financing for the research. But I think it was not in the interests of the heads of this project. After all, what could they do with such funds? No positive program of scientific UFO studies existed at that time (neither does it seem to exist at present).

I am not well acquainted with the current "UFO atmosphere" in other countries, but here in Russia it is hopelessly polluted. Newspapers and magazines are full of pseudo-ufological nonsense and complete rubbish. This seems to be another—and very effective—method of blocking serious scientific UFO studies, and discrediting the problem in public opinion. On the other hand, the scientific community demonstrates its stubborn unwillingness to take up the UFO problem. One can even understand such an attitude. The point is that, as already noted above, this problem goes beyond the limits of the current scientific paradigm. When science itself becomes ready to accept a new paradigm, in the context of the latter the UFO phenomenon (as well as other phenomena still remaining enigmatic) will have been explained in a natural way. As for the time being, the only thing we can do is to pave the way for the future. In this respect, the RIAP team is praiseworthy for their rational position: avoiding any extremes, to examine the problem.

Notes and references

[1] The introductory chapter to the book *The Petrozavodsk Phenomenon* written by myself and Y. K. Kolpakov describes the preparation of the Decision and the situation around it. The book will soon be published electronically in Russian.

[2] See: Gindilis L. M., Kolpakov Y. K. The Petrozavodsk Phenomenon — *RIAP Bulletin*, 1995, Vol. 2, No. 2-3.

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BUREAUCRATIZED PSEUDOSCIENCE

Sir,

I have been reading *RIAP Bulletin* beginning with its first issue and usually finding in it materials worthy of interest. Our field of study—anomalistics—is certainly very controversial in itself and needing a serious, objective, and responsible approach to the problems under consideration. I can admit that the RB editorial staff has usually demonstrated such an approach. But too much lack of bias is also a bias. Publication of the paper "History of State-Directed UFO Research in the USSR" by Yuliy Platov and Boris Sokolov does not seem to serve well the goals you have proclaimed. Everything has a limit, after all, and, say, the academical periodical *Problems of History* will never publish a positive paper on A. T. Fomenko's "new historical chronology". Just the same, an astronomical journal will not accept for publication astrological horoscopes, and a serious ufological journal will not reprint a sensational report from a rag newspaper. But the paper by Platov and Sokolov (as well as the general approach of the Soviet/Russian Academy of Sciences to the UFO problem) is every bit as pseudoscientific—I would even say *more* pseudoscientific, since it is armored with the official position of established science. Is it incomprehensible to the editor of RB that the "popular" opinion about the paper will be very simple and definite: Soviet science has proved that UFOs do not in fact exist.

Soviet science was an integral part of the Soviet totalitarian system. The point is not that the Party and Government gave scientists an order to solve a problem and the latter readily carried it out. But the science top brass (both academic and applied) was in fact *fused in* the Soviet establishment and these "orders" were prepared with their direct or indirect participation. A high-rank Soviet scientist (whose rank did not depend on the data from the citation index, but mainly on his "level of power") was first of all a bureaucrat and only then a researcher (if at all). Of course, the Academy of Sciences did also contain and is still containing many really outstanding scholars who have made a great contribution to science. But even a good scientist, taking on the job of a manager in the bureaucratic system, accepts with it the bureaucratic mode of action and thinking. The latter is not too complicated: one must carry out all orders from the top, then report back to one's superiors and obtain a well-deserved reward. This reward is provided not by the scientific community, but by the "chief bureaucrats"—first of all (particularly where the old Soviet system is concerned) the Party and State authorities. It is just natural that under these conditions research tasks acceptable for the scientific establishment may be of two types only: either it is an obviously solvable problem with a guaranteed result (however much will it cost to reach it), or a pseudoproblem requiring no real solution at all (the latter was certainly more typical for Soviet *social* sciences—where direct rule by the Communist Party was more prominent, but at the same time one could with ease report back with new bulky volumes glorifying the same Party). What the Soviet science bureaucrat dreaded the most was a complicated (still worse if an interdisciplinary) problem with an "open"—that it, not guaranteed *a priori*—solution. Such a problem implies an "open reward" as well: neck or nothing, so to say. Yes, in the "cracks" of Soviet bureaucratic science such problems were also being elaborated—but the scientific policy of the State in general and the Academy of Sciences in particular was oriented to "normal science" (in Kuhn's sense), that is to the "obviously solvable" "puzzles" whose results could be of some practical (first of all, military and technological) value. (This scheme is certainly somewhat idealized: for the bureaucrat the State is just a kind of milch cow, and nothing more. But the warheads of intercontinental ballistic missiles must fly and hit the mark. If not, the bureaucrat may be fired.)

And now, the UFO problem is probably the worst possible variant of a problem with an open solution—a materialized nightmare for a science bureaucrat. Notwithstanding that the Academy of Sciences had under the pressure of circumstances to take up the problem, it has always remained for the Soviet scientific establishment (even judging from the paper by Platov and Sokolov) a task of less than secondary importance. The lack of normal funding (proudly presented in the paper as—strange to say!—a great achievement) clearly demonstrates that. The very fact that the UFO program in the USSR started and lasted as long as 13 years testifies, in my opinion, that there were some hidden impulses "from the top" (Politburo? Who knows...)—but even these impulses could not overcome bureaucratic resistance on the part of the science red tape. (If I am not mistaken, one can see a similar situation in the USA—where attempts by the Federal government to charge NASA to look into the UFO problem have failed miserably.)

Now a few words about "more scientific" aspects of the work under consideration... The academical line of attacking the problem may be called amateurish at best. As far as one can judge from the paper, academical "ufologists" were waiting for a report about an anomalous phenomenon to come through official channels; then, if the report was considered as worthy of attention, they could go to the place of the event and look for a probable explanation of the case. If

such an explanation was found, the team heads ticked the report off. If there was no "probable" explanation at all (cf. the Borisoglebsk aircraft accidents), the case was classified as "unexplained" and also ticked off. After a certain amount of such data was gathered, the researchers wrote a scientific report: say, 95% of strange phenomena have been identified, 5% have not. The report was signed by the group heads and sent to their superiors. That was all. *No attempt to look into the nature and origin of these five percent of really enigmatic events has ever been made.* Wise behavior indeed! With such strange methods of treating the problem, a deeper insight into the phenomenon was just impossible. Calling things by their proper names, the Academy of Sciences of the USSR studied rocket launchings and balloon flights for 13 years, carefully avoiding anything really unknown and worthy of further examination. Can it be called a scientific investigation? Not in the least. In fact, this is exemplary *bureaucratic pseudoscience.* Attempts by the editor of RB to smooth over this impression in his editorial paper look very unconvincing.

All said and done, but there remain, however, at least two unanswered questions. First, what was the contribution (and conclusions) of the military UFO researchers? Although the paper has *two* authors, one from the Academy of Sciences and the other from the Ministry of Defense, it seems as if there have been presented mainly "academical" data and conclusions, not the "military" ones. Boris Sokolov's signature under the paper testifies that he agrees with these conclusions. In every detail, or not?

A second question will inevitably be asked by Western (especially American) ufologists: wasn't the "Soviet UFO study program" just a cover operation? At first sight, this would have been an ideal solution: what else could have lasted for so long, being so cheap (practically free), fruitless, and not too secret? But what could have been disguised under such a sophisticated cover? A really professional examination of reliable (maybe, instrumental?) UFO data performed at a high scientific level at some supersecret research institutes of the same Ministry of Defense? Doubtful, to say the least, even though such a supposition can't be ruled out completely. Strictly speaking, the results obtained by all these *Setkas* do not differ very much from those presented in the Blue Book, GEPAN/SEPRA, and Colorado Project official reports. Decade after decade, the "experts" have been grinding out the same few words: real UFOs... well... seem... eh-eh... to exist... perhaps... but these are certainly not extraterrestrials! Science.

If the Ministry of Defense was in fact interested in reproducing properties of real UFOs potentially useful for the military, such as radar invisibility, high maneuverability, etc. (and this is flatly asserted in the paper by Platov and Sokolov), the last thing they should have done in this connection would have been to track their own rocket launchings. The MOD should have forgotten about the 95% of explained cases and concentrated its attention on the 5% of inexplicable residue. It is beyond reason to consider the Soviet military as complete idiots who for 13 years were persistently pursuing gas-dust trails of their own rockets. On the other hand, what could they have done having no effective *scientific* methods of studying these very five percent of real UFOs? ...Unless, of course, they gave up the Academy of Sciences as hopeless, developed such methods with the help of non-academic scientific research bodies and launched really serious investigations. But if so, their results still remain secret.

This scenario looks logical enough, but, to be sincere, I do not believe it. Until any good proofs to the contrary come to the surface, the conception of "smart and supersecret" UFO studies covered with a camouflage net ("maskirovochnaya *setka*"—in Russian) of a "stupid and only half-secret" program is a pure speculation—both for the former USSR and the USA and France. I am afraid that this "setka" is the final truth and no "inexplicable residue" has ever existed in the maze of the Soviet bureaucratic system. Big science of this age and day cannot and does not want to solve the UFO problem. Period.

I started this letter, being, frankly speaking, under an emotional influence from reading the paper by Platov and Sokolov. At some time, however, I stopped writing and re-read both its RB version and, for a better understanding (since English is not my native language), its Russian text, published in the *Herald of the Russian Academy of Sciences* (2000, Vol. 70, No. 6). My assessment of the "UFO study program" described in the paper did not change, but that of the paper itself has somewhat evolved to the better. This is, after all, a valuable work, sufficiently frankly—and even with pride—telling of the complete fiasco of the most ambitious attempt of bureaucratized Soviet science to resolve the UFO enigma. If some readers understand it differently, this will not be the authors' fault. But following the recommendations of the Academical Commission on Pseudoscience—to accompany any published "controversial" article with comments of specialists (see: *Herald of the RAS*, 1999, Vol. 69, No. 10, p. 881), you, Sir, should have admitted this fact in your editorial and not have stated that science "did perform its <...> task: it has proved that genuine UFOs do exist" (RB, 1999, Vol. 5, No. 3-4, p. 2). If the main function of science is the quest for truth—then science has *not* performed it here. But if its main function is the quest for a "comfortable lie"—then it certainly has.

Pyotr N. Rybalko, M.S., Lviv, Ukraine

THESE STRANGE DISKS OF BAYAN-KARA-ULA...

Sir,

It is for a long time that I have been interested in the so-called "disks of Bayan-Kara-Ula". Let's recall what it is all about. This story came to light due to a paper written by the Russian philologist Vyacheslav K. Zaitsev and published in 1967 in English in the Soviet digest journal *Sputnik* [1]. The author referenced to the German periodical *Das Vegetarische Universum* as the original source of the story. According to Zaitsev, in the late 1930's there were discovered in caves of the Bayan-Kara-Ula mountain range (China) some granite disks covered with spirals. These spirals proved to be hieroglyphic inscriptions that have been subsequently deciphered by a group of Chinese scholars led by Dr. Tsum Um Nui. The texts reported that 12,000 years ago an alien space expedition had crashed on the Earth.

The well-known British ufologist Gordon Creighton tried to look into this story. In February of 1968 he sent a letter to an unnamed "Soviet engineer in Moscow" who was then "the unofficial secretary of the Russian group of UFO investigators", asking for any information about the disks of Bayan-Kara-Ula. "He replied in due course that <...> he had been able to ascertain that Vyacheslav Zaitsev had done no original investigation of his own and had simply taken the story as it had appeared in the German publication *Das Vegetarische Universum* (no date given) and in the German publication *UFO-Nachrichten*, No. 95 (of 1964). He also said he thought it has appeared in a "French" (sic) UFO journal described by him as "BUFOI" journal No. 4, of March/April, 1965." [2, p. 25] The latter title has been commented by G. Creighton as follows: "Not identified. (It is *not* BUFORA journal for March/April 1965.)" [2, p. 27]

I had a talk with Dr. V. K. Zaitsev on this subject matter on March 13, 1976, in Moscow. He confirmed that it was an article in the Belgian *BUFOI* journal (obtained in the USSR via France) that was his original source. In fact, he was not acquainted with German publications on this subject matter.

Gordon Creighton's attempts to find any of the above-mentioned sources have failed. For almost thirty years the story about the granite disks with strange inscriptions have been retold exclusively "according to Zaitsev". It was only recently that the German investigator Joerg Dendl found and reprinted the short article from *Das Vegetarische Universum* journal (its July 1962 issue) that had apparently initiated the life of this story in print (see Ref. 9). Now the chain of information transmission that preceded V. K. Zaitsev's article comes into view: *Das Vegetarische Universum* (1962) => *UFO-Nachrichten* (1964) => *BUFOI* (1965). However, many data presented by Zaitsev are lacking in the original publication. Therefore, they emerged in the second or third link of this chain, either of which could have used additional sources that we are unaware of.

Why am I taken up with all these historiographical nuances? At present, we do not know for sure if the story about the disks of Bayan-Kara-Ula is purely fictitious, or it does contain some grains of truth. In principle, there exist two possible ways of verifying it. The most obvious way is the "Chinese" one. Alas, up to this time it has proved to be in vain. Neither official inquiries to Chinese scientific bodies, nor Western researchers' trips to China (Peter Krassa, the Austrian author, has been especially active in this respect) have given us any new pieces of reliable information on this question. It would be therefore reasonable to try another way—namely, the historiographical one. I am sure that a thorough comparative analysis of the early publications about the disks from the Bayan-Kara-Ula caves may clear up much of this story. It would pay to find the above-mentioned issues of *UFO-Nachrichten* and the enigmatic, not identified even by connoisseurs *BUFOI* journal. I think that for our colleagues in Germany and Belgium this would not be an insoluble problem.

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NOTE BY EDITOR OF RB

I would like to support Dr. Morozov's appeal and to ask our foreign colleagues to take part in the search for the sources of the Bayan-Kara-Ula story. Taking this opportunity, I would also like to clarify one of secondary aspects of this story—which still confuses researchers, inspiring in them, alas, vain hopes. The case in point is the so-called "travel diary" of a certain British traveller Karyl Robin-Evans edited by David Gammon Agamon and published in 1978 in the United Kingdom under the title *Sungods in Exile: Secrets of the Dzopa of Tibet*. Some Ancient Astronaut writers still believe it is another proof of the real existence of the mysterious discs and the enigmatic Dzopa (or Dropa) tribe that came to the Earth "from a planet in the Sirius system" (see, for example: Hausdorf H. Bayan-Kara-Ula: Mystery of the Century.—*Ancient Skies*, 1996, Vol. 22, No. 6). In fact, the book *Sungods in Exile* is NOT a travel diary,

but just fiction. To make sure this is the case, please read the following fragments of two letters from Mr. David Gammon Agamon, the author (not editor!) of the book:

1. From: David Gammon, Salisbury, Wiltshire, United Kingdom. Date: August 7th, 1979. To: Mr V. V. Rubtsov, Kharkov, U.S.S.R.

"Dear Mr Rubtsov,

Thank you for your letter of July 16th <...>. I have not seen the reference to my book to which you refer and it may very well be misleading. I wrote "Sungods" with two serious intentions: firstly, to consider the political/religious/philosophical implications of prehistoric contacts, and secondly, to mock at those who too easily accept such stories on very weak or non-existent evidence. <...> My aim, in short, was to satirize the sort of contactee book, very common here and in the USA, which is aimed at an uncritical readership and also (to satirize) certain aspects of modern life <...>.

With best wishes,

David Gammon ("Karil Robin-Evans")"

2. Date: 10th January '81. <...>

"Dear Mr Rubtsov,

At last I am able to send you a copy of "Sungods in Exile". I must just remind you that it is fiction and a satire on too easy acceptance of the idea that life or some life came from outside this earth by transplantation; many accept the conclusion without looking at the evidence.

With best wishes, David Gammon."

BOOK REVIEW

INTRODUCTION TO PALEOVISITOLOGY

Vladimir Rubtsov

Y. N. Morozov. *Traces of Ancient Astronauts?* Moscow: Znanie Publishers, 1991. Paperback, 48 pages, 30 kopeks, ISBN 5-07-001602-4, in Russian.

This small book, or rather even a booklet, was published almost ten years ago. Despite its print run (about three million, or, more exactly, 2,819,868), it passed practically unnoticed by specialists. There were virtually no references to it in specialist publications, neither any reviews. Is there any point of writing and publishing such a review—especially in *RIAP Bulletin*, a periodical mainly aiming at the foreign reader? Just to get the book out of oblivion? But is it worth the effort?

It certainly is. First, this work still remains the *only* Russian-language publication in book form in which the problem of paleovisits—hypothetical ancient ET visits to the Earth—is analyzed at a really professional level. Before it there were only papers in popular science (and sometimes scholarly) periodicals; after it one can find on the Russian book market only translations of foreign Ancient Astronaut books and, delicately speaking, "compilations" of a sort (plagiarized from the same foreign books and old journal papers of Soviet times). Second, even today, ten years after its publication, the book by Yuriy Morozov does not look outdated. One could say: regretfully enough—since it means that none of the research tasks set in it has been yet solved.

To understand the place occupied by Morozov's book in the existing system of paleovisitological publications, let me briefly outline the situation in which the problem of paleovisits found itself in the early 1990's. By that time it was existing in two forms: 1) as a fairly mature parascientific field of cognitive interest, namely the Ancient Astronaut theory, or "preastronautics"; 2) as an embryonic interdisciplinary field of scientific investigation—paleovisitology.

On the other hand, the CSICOP-like "scientific inquisition" (which in itself is a part of the "immune system" of science, meant to defend the latter from "loosened" forms of thinking, but going in fact far beyond the scope of true rationality) gave birth to another sort of parascience—"anti-preastronautics". For adherents of the latter there existed no paleovisit question: it simply made no sense. As a result, the anti-paleovisit bias was still prevailing in the scientific community, especially in its establishment.

Dr. Yuriy Morozov, being a professional folklorist (he had graduated from the philological faculty of Moscow University, where he also defended his Ph.D. thesis on the historicism of folklore) has been engaged in paleovisitological studies since the late 1960's. He was probably the first researcher who came to realize the fruitlessness of the controversy between "adherents" and "opponents" of paleovisits and proposed the only possible way out from this endless debate: building paleovisitology as a research direction aimed at *studying* this problem, not defending an *a priori* accepted solution. Yuriy Morozov's works had been published in scholarly periodicals, but only after *perestroika* was he able to express his opinion on the paleovisit problem in book form.

This is a *popular* work written in simple language—but with a high "density of thought" per word. Yuriy Morozov has managed to find on 48 pages (six chapters, about 17,000 words) space enough to discuss all the main paleovisitological

topics. In a short introductory chapter "To the Reader" (p. 3), he clearly states: the usual question "Was the Earth visited by extraterrestrials in its past?" at present has no definite answer—either positive, or negative. This problem is unresolved. Still worse, it has not been attacked in practice using the scientific method. Why did the problem of paleovisits prove to be so difficult for science, and why was science unable to "assimilate" it for so long? Dr. Morozov's book partly answers this question.

Chapter 1—"Genealogy of an Idea" (pp. 4–7)—deals with the *prehistory* of the paleovisit idea. As Morozov shows, even before the start of the 20th century various authors formulated all three conceivable answers to the "main question" of this problem:

1) there are no traces of paleovisits and therefore there were no paleovisits; 2) no paleovisit traces are known at present, but they may be discovered in the future; 3) paleovisits did happen, but to find their traces, we must look at known historical material from a new viewpoint.

Chapter 2—"The Ancient Astronaut Theory" (pp. 8- 14)—discusses the *history* of the problem in this century that dates back to the late 1950's, when the mathematician and participant of the Soviet Nuclear Project Dr. Matest M. Agrest put forward the idea to begin a search for traces of extraterrestrials in the annals of history. Dr. Igor Kurchatov, an outstanding physicist and the Head of the Nuclear Project, was going to recommend Dr. Agrest's work for publication in the *Reports of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR*, but, alas, his untimely death put an end to this plan. Pity indeed—since otherwise all the history of this problem might have followed a very different path. But actually, subsequent hot discussions around the Agrest's idea were carried out mainly on the pages of popular (sometimes popular science) press. True, it was none other than the young and then-daring Carl Sagan who in 1963 advocated the same line of inquiry in the pages of the scholarly journal *Planetary and Space Science*. Established science, however, remained deaf to these appeals and the problem of paleovisits was taken up by amateurs. The Swiss writer and traveller Erich von Daeniken has for more than 30 years been the leader of the Ancient Astronaut movement. Adherents of the AAT are confident that extraterrestrials did in fact visit the Earth, making it their aim to prove this thesis using "common sense" methods. Yuriy Morozov does justice to the "inexhaustible inventiveness" of Erich von Daeniken and his colleagues in the "incessant search for more and more traces of space visitors"—criticizing therewith their simplified methods of attacking the problem. He believes, at the same time, that the "emotionally negative" attitude of the scientific community to the Ancient Astronaut theory cannot be considered as productive either.

To find a correct line of attack on the paleovisit problem, one must first return to its roots and rebuild the whole logical sequence from the bottom up. That is why Y. Morozov begins Chapter 3—"Inside a Wide Range of Problems" (pp. 15-26)—with a "childish" question: what are we looking for, after all? By definition, "space visitors" are "just" intelligent beings who came to the Earth from space. They can be biologically different from us humans, as well as further advanced in respect of scientific knowledge and technological capabilities. If a character in folklore, or—better—a real historical figure bears even one of these characteristic features, this can make us assume his or her extraterrestrial origin.

Everything seems to be OK—but in fact it is very easy to find in history and folklore a number of figures well fitting this scheme—"from Baba Yaga to Jesus Christ". These examples are not fictitious: such hypotheses were really put forward as far back as the 1960's (by Y. V. Rostsius and V. K. Zaitsev respectively). "...It is the same characteristic features that must distinguish extraterrestrial visitors from earthly people that are in fact typical for countless mythological personalities created by human fantasy on the basis of purely terrestrial realities" (p. 16). Such are, in particular, the so-called "culture heroes". Even though we can be sure that *genuine* space visitors would have been described by our ancestors in a similar system of notions, and not in the objective language of a scientific report—how will it be possible to pick up a real "signal" on the background of so much all-embracing "noise"?

Perhaps legendary descriptions and pictures of "alien machinery" would give us a necessary "filter"? As a matter of fact, there exist numerous ancient images (particularly, rock paintings), in which one can make out, with a little effort of imagination, "rockets", "spacesuits", "descent modules" of spaceships, "lunokhods", etc., etc. But in all likelihood, these are just false analogies: hardly a civilization that built interstellar spacecraft, that is far surpassed our own one in its technological capabilities, would have used such primitive (for its level of development) devices.

Then, perhaps, some sophisticated knowledge and/or technology obtained by our forefathers from space visitors could become a convincing proof of a paleovisit? Actually, fragments of strange knowledge and "know-how" are from time to time discovered in the past by historians and archaeologists. But again, usually they are anomalous only against the background of their ancient counterparts, being rather "normal" by the standards of the 20th century science and technology.

All these difficulties are due to the very nature of the supposed *indirect* traces of paleovisits. As

for the potential wealth of information they can contain, such traces should not, however, be underestimated—even if *direct* paleovisit traces considered in the following chapter (pp. 27-33) are more preferable as regards their conclusiveness.

Many scholars—even well-disposed to the paleovisit idea—believe, however, that *only* a direct paleovisit trace—that is, an "extraterrestrial artifact"—could constitute a really strong proof of an ancient ET visit to the Earth. Yuriy Morozov does admit the importance of direct traces, analyzing in sufficient detail one possible class of these: the so-called "unidentified fossil objects" ("UFOs", so to speak; in Russian these abbreviations are not identical: NIO and NLO respectively). At the same time, he is emphasizing that known "UFOs" look rather primitive as well.[1] Besides, a special search for extraterrestrial artifacts would hardly be effective; one can here count on chance discoveries only. It is the more regrettable that even known "suspicious" objects of this kind (however primitive at first sight, they are, nevertheless, anomalous) are very rarely examined in any detail. One may be quite sure that many "UFOs" went unnoticed. "It is awful to think how many extraordinary finds that could have revolutionized scientific concepts were indifferently thrown away, lost, or are still kept by somebody as curious trinkets" (p. 32).

Chapter 5—"The Dogon Miracle" (pp. 34-41)—as is clear from its title, deals with the astronomical lore of the Dogon, a West-African people whose astonishing knowledge about the Universe in general and the Sirius system in particular was actively discussed in the second half of the 1970's, both in the popular and scholarly press. Y. Morozov objectively describes both the contents of this lore and the controversy around it. Not ignoring existing problems, difficulties and doubts associated with the "Dogon astronomy", he arrives, nonetheless, at the conclusion that it is very close to the "ideal" (as a possible indirect trace of a paleovisit) and can therefore be a good basis for further scrutiny.

In the final chapter—"Task for Tomorrow" (pp. 42-47)—the author pays attention to other supposed paleovisit traces that he considers as worthy of examination. These are, in particular, the ancient wooden model of a glider found in Egypt in 1898, small gold "airplanes" from Colombia, ancient Indian texts about "sky chariots"—vimanas, and the motif in folklore of time dilatation. Neither of them has been studied in sufficient detail, making it impossible to come to any definite—and substantiated—conclusion about their true nature. To perform such a study, it is necessary to unite the efforts of specialists in various scientific disciplines under the cover of an interdisciplinary research direction—paleovisitology.

By the year 2000 the situation in the problem of paleovisits remains, however, basically the same as it was in the year 1991. Paleovisitology did not come out of its "embryonic" state and the Ancient Astronaut movement has a regrettable tendency to regress (the Ancient Astronaut Society has closed down, and the new AAS-RA organization has not as yet taken its place in this field). True, the German-speaking AAT community works actively, being centered around the journal *Sagenhafte Zeiten*, with Erich von Daeniken as its recognized leader. There have arisen, nevertheless, practically no new paleovisit-related ideas; instead of it, AAT proponents display greater interest in "parallel" fields of investigations—first of all, "historical ufology" (which may lead to erosion of the AAT as such). It is encouraging, however, to note that young enthusiasts of the paleovisit idea play an important part in Ancient Astronaut activity in Germany, Switzerland, and Austria. In fact, were it not for the efforts of these enthusiasts (both young and not too young), one could have said that the problem of paleovisits was standing on the border between stagnation and disintegration. There is, however, a third way out—up to serious investigations.

In these conditions, the answer to the question of whether this—not very recent—book should be translated into foreign languages (first of all, into English and German) is rather obvious: it should, but there will hardly be a sufficient market for it. There are few little-known facts in Morozov's book; it is the author's *view of the problem*—equidistant both from ignorant debunking and from naive credulity—that is really new. Perhaps, the Internet would be a proper place for its translations: they would help the intelligent skeptic to understand that the paleovisit problem is really meaningful and serious, and the intelligent enthusiast that it is still far from having been solved.

Notes and references

[1] The more interesting seem to be the micro-objects discovered in the years 1991-1993, after the book had been published, on the Narada river, in Northern Urals, Russia. *Conceivably* they have been produced with the help of advanced "nanotechnology". But certainly, this still remains to be proved—as well as the objects' alien origin. (See: Hausdorf H. Sensationeller Fund in Russland.—*Ancient Skies* (Deutsche Ausgabe), 1997, 21. Jahrgang, Nr. 2.)

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